Political Culture and the Post-war Labour Party

Values, Practices and Activism in South Lewisham, 1948–71

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'A Party lives—or dies—on the quality and number of its active supporters. It has been our constant endeavour to find more and better workers for our Cause. To-day we find ourselves with an excellent band of trained and enthusiastic workers ready for the coming fight. For Labour is now on the forward march.'[1] This hyperbolic claim, made in 1954 by the South Lewisham Labour Party (SLLP), nevertheless captures something of the importance of membership to one constituency party. It points to one reason why amongst historians and political scientists there has been longstanding interest in local Labour politics, originating in part from the claim that the national trajectories cannot be understood in isolation from local events and developments.[2] Yet discussions of local political parties, although in many cases making extensive reference to activists, have at the centre of their concern an 'institution'. Thus, it is only in the past few years that the specific concern with patterns of Labour Party membership and activism has emerged amongst historians.[3]

This paper stems from a larger project which aims to develop new quantitative ways of examining patterns of membership and activism, using a case study of the South Lewisham Labour Party, Labour's largest constituency party for much of the immediate post-war period.[4] However, our purpose here is with more qualitative understandings. In this paper, we examine one significant way of looking at grassroots activism, using the concept of 'political culture', advanced by, among others, Lawrence Black in *Old Labour, New Britain? The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951–64*.[5] Reflecting on the fortunes of the left generally, including the Labour Party, in the 1950s and 1960s, Black argues that '[f]ar from being the passive beneficiaries of change, Conservative success was worked-for, not inherited from social and economic forces. Likewise the left's hard times under affluence were largely of its own making.'[6] According to this argument, the reasons for Labour's decline in membership and activism and its electoral failure can be found not so much in external factors but rather in the internal 'political culture' of the party. Black explicitly discusses the concept of political culture only briefly, with the suggestion that it is constituted of ways of thinking, associated with both 'informal, instinctive and ethical impulses' and 'formal or explicitly ideological reasoning'. Elsewhere he refers to the 'culture of politics' as 'its instincts, conduct, style and remit of its influence in the wider culture'.[7] More about his understanding of the concept can be inferred from the development of the argument in the rest of the book which looks in some detail at Labour (and Communist) branch life, identifying some significant problems of organisation including the small numbers of those actively involved, regular changes and upheavals in terms of personnel, meetings

dominated by organisational matters rather than politics, the concomitant low attendances, inactivity and apathy, as well as the often poor and shabby condition of party and branch premises. The book examines the dysfunctional relationship between the Labour Party and young people and the way in which this manifested itself through the prevalence of 'socialist squares' within the party's youth organisation and through disagreements and conflicts about the use of leisure time.[8] The book also discusses Labour's response to affluence, their rejection of consumption as the solution to society's problems and concerns about popular or 'Americanised' culture in particular commercial television and the passivity and lack of engagement engendered by television viewing.[9] The final chapters consider the nature of moral thinking within the Labour Party, arguing that all of Labour's thinkers—revisionists included—adopted a 'persistently ethical tone rather than the empirical, non-ideological and state-driven, top-down aspects many commentators have chosen to emphasize'. Black identifies this dominant attitude as a key factor in explaining the party's reluctance to engage with the developing field of political marketing.[10] The description of political culture as outlined here thus seems to incorporate a number of different elements, including sets of activities and practices, often in a formal institutional context (particularly at local level), as well as associated sets of mentalities, or ways of thinking. The search then is not for a coherent political philosophy but rather much more generalised inferences about motivations and patterns of thought:

> The dusty realms of branch life disclose not coherent ideologies, but informal ways of thinking, moral imperatives and established mores of political activity. Something of the diversity is scrutinized—how the associational often prevailed over the more explicitly 'political'; how 'apathy', while real enough in the 1950s, was also a consequence of activists' imagination; how organization could shield socialists from as much as connect them to their audience.[11]

The book also suggests that this political culture should be given a central explanatory role: 'the contradiction in Labour's status as a mass party, yet one whose local organisation was palpably decrepit, was to be explained less by a centralized power structure or by trade union influence, than by the prevailing party culture.'[12]

Taking Black's work as a starting point, this article provides an examination of the political culture of the South Lewisham party. After a brief presentation of some background on South Lewisham, it discusses in turn the party's institutions, policy and lower level activities, particularly political education and socialising. In each case, we consider how the evidence suggests ways to understand the values and practices that inform our understanding of political culture. Pointing to the patterns of typicality and atypicality of activities, practices and results in South Lewisham, we argue for a need to rethink the nature of 'political culture' and the methods by which historians might examine and understand it. Combining what we argue is a largely atypical picture of internal political culture with the rather typical trajectory of SLLP in other respects, we also argue that the internal culture of political parties may in fact play a rather small part in explaining broader patterns of success and failure.

The South Lewisham Labour Party

South Lewisham Labour Party was clearly not a typical constituency party.

For one thing, its MP when the seat was created in 1948 was Herbert Morrison, architect of Labour's strategy in London and, in his own mind—if not Attlee's—Labour's next leader. Apart from its high profile MP, the SLLP's most distinctive feature was its extraordinary mass membership. Even before the war, its predecessor party, the East Lewisham Divisional Labour Party, in common with the neighbouring parties in Woolwich, was known for its organisation and large membership concentrated on the new estates. In 1945, East Lewisham had 2,000 members rising rapidly to 5,000 by 1947. After boundary changes in 1948, which resulted in the formation of the South Lewisham constituency, the local party continued to grow in size. In 1952, the year when Labour's membership peaked nationally, South Lewisham had 7,110 members, rising to 7,600 a year later. It was by some distance the largest party in the country. Few other parties came close. Woolwich East had nearly 6,000 members in 1953, and other parties such as Bexley and Chislehurst in Kent, and Lanark, Taunton and Salford West elsewhere, achieved memberships in excess of 5,000, but these were exceptional. More typically, constituency party memberships, even at the high point of Labour's membership nationally, ranged from less than 1,000 to 3,000.[13] Whilst the level of constituency membership was exceptionally high, the broad pattern of its trajectory was not unusual. As Labour's national membership fell over the subsequent years so did the South Lewisham party's and, by 1970, it had just 2,072 members.

Part of the reason for this extraordinary membership was the personnel involved in Lewisham and the concentration they placed on membership and model organisation in Lewisham. For most of this period, Morrison's closet local allies were the husband and wife team of Jim and Mabel Raisin. Previously active together in Woolwich, they moved to Lewisham in 1933, with Jim Raisin acting as party secretary and agent and Mabel full-time '(unpaid) deputy'. When Jim was promoted to London District Organiser in 1946, he was succeeded in Lewisham as secretary and agent by Mabel. Both, like Morrison, were convinced of the need to build local parties with 'big memberships', and together they constructed a local party machine that in many ways was the blue-print for the organisational model recommended by the Labour Party but rarely achieved in London or elsewhere. According to Tom Jeffery, this 'conscious and concentrated effort' involved the creation and maintenance of a local party apparatus which went down to the street level ('street captains'), regular and centrally directed canvassing and a programme of social, sporting and educational activities. The advances of the post-World War Two years were built on the foundations laid by 'the vigorous work of the pioneers of the East Lewisham Labour Party, including Mr and Mrs Raisin' during the 1930s.[14]

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Lewisham was largely a middle class and clerical worker dormitory suburb, but a number of demographic changes over the next 50 to 60 years substantially altered the character of the borough. Chief among these changes were the interwar construction of large-scale London County Council (LCC) cottage estates in the south of the borough (the Bellingham and Downham estates), the arrival of a substantial black, mainly Jamaican population in the 1950s and 1960s, and the incorporation of the more conventionally inner-city areas of Deptford into the borough in the 1960s. These changes were reflected in fluctuations in electoral fortunes in the borough. For the first half of the twentieth century, Lewisham returned Conservative MPs and controlled the

local council. Labour first established a foothold in the borough only with the building of the LCC estates which, between 1921 and 1931, increased the population of Lewisham by over 25 per cent, mostly in the new wards of Downham and Bellingham. These new estates were largely populated by people from outside Lewisham, including the docks and riverside areas of Deptford, Southwark, Bermondsey, and Rotherhithe.[15]

At the 1945 election, Labour won the two Lewisham seats, East and West, for the first time. Morrison won East Lewisham by the large margin of 15,000 votes, over-turning the previous Conservative majority of 6,000. Arthur Skeffington, in West Lewisham, won a much closer contest by only 2,500 votes. The scale of Morrison's victory reflected not only his successful wooing of the black-coated and middle-class electorate of suburban Lewisham but also the real Labour strongholds in the south of the constituency on the LCC estates. Boundary changes in 1948 then transformed Lewisham's two seats into three—creating two Conservative? Labour marginals (West Lewisham and North Lewisham) and further concentrating the core Labour vote in Morrison's new seat of South Lewisham.[16] With some fluctuations in the vote, notably in 1959 when Morrison's successor Carol Johnson's majority fell from 6,000 to 3,000, Labour continued to safely hold the seat until it was once again dissolved by boundary changes and the constituency of East Lewisham was re-created shortly before the February 1974 election.

Results of London and borough elections confirm Lewisham as divided electorally. Control of the local council, at least until Deptford's traditional Labour voting-wards were incorporated into Lewisham in 1964, switched back and forth between Labour and Conservatives. Again, Labour's strongholds were in the south. From 1928 onwards, Downham and Bellingham wards consistently returned (sometimes the only) Labour candidates to the council. After the 1945 general election, Labour took control of the Lewisham Borough Council for the first time. Control was short-lived and, in 1949, the party only retained 11 of its previous 40 seats. Conservative hopes that this result might presage 'Mr Herbert Morrison's ìsafeî constituency…drifting gratifyingly towards the borderline' turned out to be overly optimistic.[17] In fact, all the 11 seats that Labour had retained were in the wards of South Lewisham—specifically Bellingham (3), Grove Park (3), Southend (3) and Whitefoot (2), once again indicating the location of Labour's core support. In wards such as Bellingham and Grove Park, Labour received 70–80 per cent of the total votes cast. The results of 1945 and 1949 set the pattern for the coming decade with the council regularly changing hands. A similar pattern can be discerned in the LCC elections; Lewisham had nine representatives—three from each constituency. While the Conservatives frequently won the seats in North and West, South Lewisham always returned three Labour councillors

Institutions

In terms of formal organisation, the SLLP had at its centre a General Council (GC), which was responsible for the management of the party and decided on its policies. Despite occasional complaints in the later 1960s about the frequency of meetings, it met regularly once a month. The Executive Committee, with members appointed from the General Council, was responsible for the day-to-day operations between GC meetings. However, the main focus of activity for members was in the ward committees. Ward level activities were organised by the officers, generally a chairman,

secretary, treasurer and two or three polling district officers. Largely co-ordinated from the party centre, but in co-operation with the wards, the SLLP collectors provided the main form of contact which most members had with the party through their routine collections.

Formal institutions such as these relate to the study of the political culture of local parties in at least two respects. First, the structure enabled and rewarded certain types of activity and attitudes, whilst preventing or penalising others. They present important constraints which any study of the culture of local politics must recognise. Second, these organisational structures are regularised activities or practices that have both actual and symbolic significance and hence may be taken to reflect, or even on some accounts to embody, the culture of the party. Such an account can only ever be partial: the design or emergence of local parties' structures in many respects tells us more about the values of the party nationally; after all, the organisational structure described above to a very great degree simply replicated the model rules designed for constituency Labour parties by the national organisation. As such may be thought to tell us relatively little specifically about the culture of the local party. Nevertheless, the extent to which a local party was able or willing to follow the prescribed structures is in of itself potentially revealing. In particular, South Lewisham's ability to sustain a model, which both adhered to and deviated from the national norms, and the ways in which these formal institutions were negotiated and argued about, including disputes with the national and London party organisations, raises some interesting questions about the influence of local political cultures.

Perhaps the most significant deviation from a typical Labour constituency organisation is precisely in the close relationship between the model structure and the implementation in Lewisham. In many constituency parties the formal organisational structures below constituency level had little real existence. This was not the case in South Lewisham where implementation was taken very seriously and organisation was central to the ethos of the local arty. Indeed, in many ways South Lewisham provided the model upon which the rules were based or first tested. Strenuous efforts were made to retain a full structure of the street-level captains throughout the period of the party. In general, the party operated at near to full coverage, with urgent efforts made to rectify shortfalls when they did occur.[18] Although there is some evidence that achieving this became significantly more difficult in the late 1960s, a full list of positions in the constituency from 1967 shows remarkably few vacancies.[19] This broad picture of adherence to national party's recommended structures provides one backdrop to understanding the culture of the party—which emphasises the importance that such institutional arrangements were accorded within the South Lewisham Party.

However, there were deviations from the model. Perhaps, most notably, the organisation of the party at the ground level—in terms of its collectors and canvassing—was under greater constituency level control than laid down in the model rules. Whilst in the rules canvassing and propaganda were primarily to be the responsibility of the wards, in South Lewisham practices were more centralised. Collectors' routes were allocated centrally by the agent and, in one of the local innovations picked up on but not universally recommended by the 1955 national Wilson report on party organisation, South Lewisham allowed its collectors to keep a proportion of the subscriptions paid. Superficially, this policy appeared successful. In 1961, the scheme was

working so well that the constituency decided to move towards paying its canvassing team as well. Even in the late 1960s, the party had most, if not all, of its routes covered and, despite criticism of the scheme elsewhere for subverting a 'socialist ethos', it did not appear particularly controversial in Lewisham. However, clearly the scheme did not provide the only, or even a major, incentive to perform this role with some choosing to donate their commission back to the party. In 1951, the party also established a Central Canvassing Corps, which provided organised direction to activity both during and outside of election periods.[20] This 'Socialist commando unit', a group increasing in size from 20 to 35 members in the first year of operation, was primed, according to party and local newspaper sources, with up-to-date information on all policy matters. The unit selected one of the seven wards in the division each Monday evening, calling on all Labour voters on the marked electoral register, recruiting 845 new members in just two months in 1952.[21] The emphasis placed on such centralising initiatives and the effort the GC claimed it was making to get the corps to be 'an influence within the party' reflected a pride in not just any set of institutions, but rather in structures that could be seen to be effective in meeting their stated aims. The central direction of these processes also flows from the primary importance placed on the establishment and retention of effective organisational and membership structures by successive secretary-agents, the Raisins and then Cyril Hillam.

Central then to the political culture of the Lewisham party, as reflected in its formal institutions, is an intense pride in these institutions—a pride which developed out of a sense that these arrangements were not arbitrary, but were effective because they worked. Such background values are perhaps even more explicitly reflected in the aspects of the party's activity that were much less successful, particularly in the organisation of youth and women. In these initiatives, the South Lewisham party grappled with the recommendations of the national party, but with the same largely disappointing results also apparent nationally leading to revealing tensions.

There seems to have been a genuine commitment on the part of the party to support both youth and women's political activity. At its very first meeting, and under the guidance of its full-time secretary and election agent Mabel Raisin, the new South Lewisham constituency party made the organisation of women, especially young women, a priority.[22] In 1954 Morrison argued that the party's future lay in the education of politically aware generations of young people:

[Young people] are vital to the future of the Labour and Socialist cause. Upon their knowledge, education, reading and capacity in political organisation and the exposition of Constructive Socialist thought much, very much, depends for our Party and our country.[23]

The party nevertheless struggled in its attempts to attract and retain the support of both women and youth. The party had between 1,000 and 2,500 women members. In numerical terms, this was many more than most other constituency parties. However, this represented only 20–33 per cent of the party's members, low compared with other constituency parties and perhaps surprising for a party which based its strength on the large residential estates and the co-operative movement rather than industry and trade unions. Even more acute were the difficulties with respect to youth with the lack of interest

from younger voters a commonly recurring theme. These issues contributed to, and were reflected in, the respective institutions the party established to deal with youth and women's organisation.[24]

The first League of Youth branch in Lewisham to be reformed after the war was in Hither Green in 1948. By 1952 a further three branches were operating in South Lewisham: Rushey Green, Bellingham and Downham. However, by the mid-1950s, when the national party decided to disband the League as a semi-independent organisation and reorganise League branches as local sections of the adult party, only one, Hither Green, was still functioning. Even this branch struggled and, by 1957, it had ceased as a political body and continued to meet only as a social club.[25]

In 1959, following Labour's third straight general election defeat, the party became increasingly concerned about how it was losing the youth vote to a Conservative Party seemingly more in tune with the desires and aspirations of young people.[26] The establishment of a new youth organisation, the semiindependent Young Socialists (YS), launched in 1960 was one of the suggestions advanced to address this apparent disadvantage. However, like similar initiatives, the YS were soon beset by political and organisational difficulties. In South Lewisham, the problems were not so much political—though the influence of 'pressure groups' like CND and of 'visiting political undesirables' occasioned some concern—but the lack of political activity within the branch and the kind of behaviour which the party believed resulted from its programme of primarily social activities. The local YS branch developed out of a youth club initiative designed to bring the party into contact with local young people. The party agreed to spend the not-inconsiderable sum of £57 on table tennis tables, dart-boards, football and netball equipment, but this expenditure came with strings: the constituency party stressed that the Young Socialists must 'justify by their acts this expenditure by the Party'.[27]

Unfortunately, the YS was unable to live up to these expectations. A 'majority of members' opposed any attempt to introduce political discussion into meetings. Worse, on several occasions branch nights were marred by fights, damage to property and theft—the embarrassing details of which made their way into the local press.[28] Although non-party members using the social facilities caused much of the trouble, part of the problem lay in the difficulty of obtaining capable youth leaders. Thus, supervision by adult party members was necessary. The branch was disbanded and re-launched on several occasions with new leaders in place but with little success. Only towards the end of the decade did the local YS seem to take on a more stable and political character. Yet, even then, the small numbers involved made sustained political activity difficult.[29]

As with youth, the organising of women was a priority at the formation of the constituency. However, the efforts of the party to establish sustained separate women's institutions were a similar failure. By 1952, the party had five Women's Sections or branches (in Bellingham, Southend, Grove Park, Catford and St Andrews) as well as at the insistence of the London Labour Party, a Central Women's Committee. But the following year two had been wound up and by 1957, in an echo the local League of Youth's fate, the final women's section in Bellingham had been formally disbanded, continuing to meet merely as a discussion and social group.[30] Further attempts to organise

women, at least in separate sections within the party, met with little success. Indeed, by far the most stable and long-lived women's organisations within the local labour movement were the Co-operative Women's Guilds, particularly the Rushey Green Guild, which had been active in local Labour politics since the 1920s. This would suggest that those structures that were the most successful were those organisations with a history and clear political and organisational focus rather than those which were formed in response to central urgings.

These efforts at establishing institutions to promote youth and women's participation revealed some attempt to follow the models established higher up within the party, at regional or national level. Yet, in contrast to the other institutions discussed, they were not perceived as effective.Where this basic requirement was not met, the party was happy to drop its status as a model party. The party followed every national initiative on the organisation of young people but, like the national picture, none of these initiatives were sustained or a success. Proposals for a central branch to co-ordinate youth activities across Lewisham were abandoned 'in the absence of any evidence…that a sufficient number of young people were interested enough in the formation of another branch of the League'. As with national Labour, one senses a lack of conviction with regard to the purpose and efficacy of youth organisation not apparent elsewhere in SLLP organisation. Similarly, when structures for women's organisations, imposed according to the model set out by the London Labour Party, failed, the response was even more robust. Mabel Raisin wanted her 'severe criticism' placed on record: 'We have always held in this party, that before forming any additional unit it was first necessary to find not only officers, but suitable persons to manage the Committee when formed'.[31] There may have been pride in the model structure and operation of the formal institutions of the party, but it was an affection that lay in the perception of their effective operation and of their appropriateness.

Policy

The party's formal institutions provide an important starting point for examining the political culture of local Labour parties, both as a backdrop and as an indication of some of the party member's central values. However, the more explicit pronouncements on political issues, and related claims made by members, provide an obvious counterpoint for assessing the kinds of issues that motivated the party membership.

Politically, the dominant forces in the constituency identified closely with their most famous MP, Herbert Morrison. Like Morrison, in the 1950s the local party tended to advocate a gradualist approach to politics, advocating consolidation of Labour's achievements rather than agitating for further radical change. Concentrating on local issues, the party opposed the kind of radicalism and division that might threaten Labour's electoral alliance, seeking at all times to present the voters with a united face.

As with most constituency parties, the most-discussed policy issues were those of local significance, particularly housing (including rent rises and the ownership of the housing stock), education and other local services and the cost of public transport.[32] In internal party elections (for the National Executive Committee (NEC) or for the London Labour Party executive), the party voted for loyalist or right-wing candidates. Among the delegates to the General Council, there was always a left-wing grouping, but it was always only a minority and candidates associated with the left and Bevanism such

as Richard Crossman, Barbara Castle and even, in the early 1950s, Harold Wilson, did not receive majority support among GC delegates until well into the 1960s when they had become leading and mainstream members of the national party. The 'lefts' defeat of Morrison in the constituency section of the NEC in 1952 particularly incensed many senior officials in the local party and it responded by issuing a leaflet about Morrison entitled 'A Great Londoner' to all party members in South Lewisham. As well as emphasising the personal contribution that Morrison had made to the party, the leaflet characterised his opponents as a collection of 'near-Communists, the pacifists, the temperamental anarchists, the ìclear-out-of-everywhereî school' and likened Bevan's conference rhetoric to that of Stalin 'working up to a ìpurgeî of "traitors"'.[33] The local left, and perhaps others who felt that this to be too inflammatory and too factional, sent in resolutions stressing the need for unity and an end to all personal attacks on members, although the Executive judged that the officers had 'acted in good faith'.[34]

One of the most important developments in post-war Lewisham was the arrival of significant numbers of black immigrants from Jamaica and elsewhere. Although there was little immediate impact on the LCC and Greater London Council (GLC) estates in the wards which made up the South Lewisham constituency (most of the new population initially found accommodation in the privately rented properties to the centre and north of the borough), racism and race relations were issues that concerned political parties locally and nationally.[35] The response of the South Lewisham party to the issue illustrates the already noted desire to maximise the appearance of unity and downplaying of controversial issues. It was not that the party was totally unwilling to take a stand on these matters, and indeed some sought to play a positive role, organising meetings on 'racial unity' and opposing the government's immigration legislation as discriminatory. Nevertheless, there was clear evidence of dissenting voices within the local labour movement, with affiliated trade union branches passing resolutions opposing 'unrestricted' immigration or condemning government moves 'to provide equal opportunity in employment and housing irrespective of colour'. While the party did not support such resolutions, the awareness of divergent views on the subject persuaded leading figures to play down the significance of any local problems. In the words of one leading local official, it was best to 'go easy on this question generally as there appeared to be no problem of integration in Lewisham, and at times well meant action only tended to create a problem.'[36]

Political discussion within the South Lewisham party may thus seem rather limited, uncontroversial and focussed on local issues, and that was certainly the public perception that the party was keen to foster. The SLLP line invariably emphasised unity and support for the national leadership around the principles of 'socialism'. Indeed, the concept of 'socialism', though never clearly defined and certainly not imbued with any real radical intent, provided a number of the few occasions on which (relatively mild) criticism of the national organisation were articulated. After the national victories in 1964 and 1966, the Lewisham party argued that the Labour government had not been sufficiently bold in distancing itself from the policies of previous Conservative administrations and occasionally registered their disappointment on policies with regard to industrial relations, the railways and prescription charges. Late on in the life of the Labour government, the SLLP called for more 'socialism' when making decisions in the future, a much more redistributive taxation system and a significant increase in overseas aid.[37] Put

this way, the idea of 'socialism' and opposition to Conservatism gave the party a sense of internal cohesion whilst providing the basis for policy direction. Yet, in order to perform this function, socialism itself had to remain largely unexamined and undefined. When the content of socialism itself became the focus for attention, it could not serve its usual unifying purpose. Such divisions were, for example, made explicit in the request by Bellingham ward for the party to submit a resolution to national conference calling for support for 'democratic socialism'. The resolution spelt out what such a focus would require, including a commitment to Clause 4, the extension of democracy by the NEC and a campaign of political education in party, industry and nation. The local leadership neutered the resolution by replacing the specifics with the general 'desire to take a further step towards democratic socialism' and saw the resolution adopted. The controversial nature of the understanding of 'socialism' was revealed in the narrow margin by which it was passed.[38]

This evidence provides some indication of the values that motivated party members. Attempts to transform or even influence national party policy were infrequent and issues of 'high' or national politics were not the primary concern of party activity. This loyalism and the relative absence of policy discussion were indicative of two things. First, constituency party activists did not see their primary responsibilities in terms of the making of policy—national or local. Rather they perceived their purpose in terms of enabling achievement of the goals that they accepted were articulated by the national leadership. Second, and as significantly, the absence of vigorous debate in many arenas was due in part to active political management. The constituency leadership believed that dissent and disagreement would have negative consequences for party activity and the party's electoral prospects with any signs of disunity being exploited by the local Tory-inclined press. Hence, party leaders sometimes acted to prevent the expression of minority viewpoints—delegates to the national party conference were to speak and vote on behalf of the whole party and, as in 1954, only allowed to speak if their 'views expressed the considered opinion of all three delegates'.[39] Such concerns with the value of unity and agreement can be perceived in part in the relative lack of debate. But we also know that this appearance of unity was partly an artificial construct, managed by the party for public consumption, because on occasions the façade cracked to reveal real political divisions that could not be avoided.

While a minority, there was a reasonably sized left-wing group within the party. This was evident in the votes for NEC candidates and others but was also clearly discernible in the debates over the very divisive cold war issues, in particular nuclear disarmament. On issues such as atomic testing or German rearmament, the left were easily defeated. Resolutions that were critical of British or American foreign and defence policies were only passed when they had been neutered or balanced by the addition of criticisms of the Soviet Union. On disarmament, any resolution that called for unilateral action by the British or Americans was amended to the multilateral position favoured by the party leadership.[40] After the decision of the 1960 Labour Party annual conference to support unilateral disarmament, the SLLP leadership acted to minimise the divisions within its own membership. The party's delegates had been mandated to vote against unilateralism at the conference and afterwards some leading figures made clear their support for Gaitskell's determination to overturn the decision. Others, aware of the divisions

on this issue within SLLP, advocated a tactical silence to promote party unity. Eventually, however, public discussion was forced on the issue and the Executive issued a statement which, while recognising that the party's annual conference was 'the policy making body of the Party', reserved the right for 'constituencies, affiliated organisations or individuals' to disagree with such democratically made decisions and 'to attempt to change the policy by democratic means within the organisation'.[41]

It is clear that the divisions between left and right were at this time very sharp and the party leaders feared the effect on the party's ability to function effectively. Party secretary and agent Cyril Hillam (he had succeeded Mabel Raisin in 1960) indicated his fears and priorities when he claimed that the constituency party's work was not being hampered by any disunity and that the debate had been carried on a 'comradely sprit and with sincerity of purpose' with both sides working together on canvassing campaigns 'united in their efforts to forward the work of the party'.[42] The reality was that significant political tensions—and in some cases physical intimidation—were a part of SLLP meetings at this time. One constituency activist complained of the 'barrage of abuse' aimed at some speakers, particularly younger ones, at General Council meetings; another GC delegate and CND supporter claimed that he had been assaulted by a senior member and elected councillor who had sought to stop him from selling copies of *Peace News* outside a meeting.[43] A special internal report into the conduct of meetings sought to break down the barriers between the political blocks, criticising behaviour at party meetings and instructing members to end the practice of sitting 'in blocks of "left", "right", "centre" or "what have you" [as it] often engenders ill will and misunderstanding that would not otherwise arise'. The goal of party management was to direct and stimulate activity, and this might, and sometimes did, mean not airing the sources of disagreement. The report urged members to behave reminding them that 'at the end of the day, let us remain true friends and comrades in the movement.'[44]

Wards, organisation, education and fellowship

If we are to understand the values and practices of the constituency party, it is of course essential to look beyond the rather narrow confines of official institutions and policy, to consider the internal life of the party, particularly at ward level. For most activists the ward was the focus of their engagement, but what this entailed varied considerably. The functions of ward organisation identified in Labour's Party Organisation pamphlet included recruiting new members, retaining and servicing existing members, maintaining up-to-date membership lists, organising regular and effective meetings, collecting subscriptions, delivering party information and literature to members, and maintaining a marked register of electors. These explicitly political activities were to be supplemented by a social side 'for fellowship and making money'.[45]

In South Lewisham, the co-ordination of the canvassing and collecting activity was directed at constituency level by successive secretary-agents. Although this centralisation stemmed from the priority of efficiency, these activities remained vital to the life of the ward because they were implemented by activists whose primary sphere of activity remained largely their local ward. Canvassing was not, as the SLLP's journal Digest noted, 'like selling vacuum cleaners or brushes, even the most unintelligent folk know the uses of these things' but 'much more difficult because a number of ordinary

intelligent people, men and women, still have little or no idea of Labour's achievements and know even less about a future Labour Government's policy'. Collecting too was regarded as 'an important link between the Party and its members', as one collector argued this was 'not surprising since it is upon the subscriptions collected regularly every month that the very life of the Party depends'.[46] With the largest individual membership in the country, the problems of subs collection were particularly acute in the South Lewisham because of the difficulties of keeping track of and retaining so many members. Collectors acted as a central mechanism for communication with members. Members' queries covered a huge range of topics, but most appear to have been about party policy, closely followed by 'ward questions' such as the date of the next outing. The process was not just one-way communication of the party's view; as it, too, learned from its members. As one collector put it 'I often think that our Borough Council members could learn a lot if they were at my elbow sometimes.'[47] Membership related activities such as regular canvassing and collecting formed the core of ward practices. They were regarded as of great importance in the wards, not only in their own right but also because wards were the training ground for the higher level activists of the future, with new activists learning from old hands who 'could fill a book on their canvassing experience'.[48] Nevertheless, ward activities went well beyond these matters, which remained the province of a relatively small number of the most active members.

Although varying considerably over the period, there were active ward associations in all of the constituency's seven wards. Each of the wards held a monthly meeting on a weekday evening. Labour Party ward meetings have become notorious in writing on activism and political culture, both for the dismal environments in which they were generally held and for their excessive concern with organisational over political matters. It was certainly an issue that the South Lewisham party actively considered at the time. In terms of the surroundings, party headquarters were at 35 Brownhill Road, situated in Rushey Green ward, and they and the adjacent Culverly ward held their meetings at 'number 35'. The party did not own properties in the other wards, and there was a lack of other suitable premises in the constituency. The other wards generally met in local schools, although it took considerable effort to secure these locations because they were in heavy demand for evening classes. Keen to stress the benefits of such an environment, the *Digest* regularly suggested that the 'lovely' school surroundings could also be considered an active part of Labour's propaganda effort. Whitefoot ward, for example, 'holds its meetings in the splendour of Catford County School, a fine example of Labour's challenge to the future and a worthy setting for this energetic group.'[49] The appearance of '35' was also a matter of some concern. Although certainly not amongst the worst of Labour's local accommodation in the early period, the property was extensively revamped in the late-1950s and brought up-to-date: 'the dingy interior has given way to colour and brightness from a contemporary style that has evoked many comments, but few will dispute the lively air that has resulted.'[50] It was considered a suitable location to entertain longstanding Swedish Social Democratic Prime Minister Tage Erlander when he came to London as part of the 1959 electoral campaign and was in some demand in the 1960s from surrounding constituencies for their activities.[51] This was at some distance removed from the images of Ramsay MacDonald still hanging apocryphally in some party offices.

Shifting the focus of activists away from an 'excessive concentration' on organisational matters through political discussion and education was also an important aspiration of party life. Party meetings from constituency down to ward level were to be made more interesting by the discussion of policy issues. Stress was put on making GC meetings more 'attractive and alive' by following the executive committee report with a discussion on an aspect of current national party policy, led by an outside speaker or the SLLP's Political Education Officer (PEO).[52] Regular advertisements for, and reports of, ward meetings, placed stress on the political discussion there.Wards were encouraged to reduce the administrative or routine business of meeting and to devote more time to a speaker or discussions on a topical matter. Enlivening local meetings was essential as Mabel Raisin realised, 'this method is, I believe, going to build up the interest in these monthly meetings, as only a tiny fraction are interested in long drawn out reports of actual party organisation, often given by very dull people'.[53] By 1952, five of the seven wards held separate executive committee meetings to help reduce the time spent discussing organisational matters in ward meetings.[54] Indeed, the question of political education was seen as central to the mission of the South Lewisham party. The conception of the mass party advocated by Morrison and the Raisins was not just one which enrolled large numbers, it also entailed the intellectual and active commitment of those members to the cause of Labour. In many ways this was the hardest part but, as Morrison argued, 'Political education and sound understanding of our vigorous party organisation are of real importance.We are outstanding in numbers: we must also be outstanding in knowledge, drive and thinking capacity'.[55]

For this reason, the constituency PEO was seen as an important role within the party, often filled by high profile individuals like South Lewisham's 'adopted son' Patrick Gordon Walker, the MP for Smethwick in the late-1940s, and Fred Hawes, one of the London County Councillors in the 1950s, or 'high-fliers' such as Roger Godsiff, PEO from 1968 and later MP for Birmingham Sparkbrook. For all but relatively brief periods, there were also PEOs at ward level. The traditional place for political education was at the various ward and constituency party meetings discussed above. In addition, for the most active members there were area schools, run from time to time by the Political Education Committee.[56] In the later 1950s, recognising the problems of working in a large party where most members did not attend meetings, the party began to look for alternatives, primarily through the development of Digest, the party magazine from 1957 and through the use of new technologies such as using tapes from the Labour Party's Tape Library Service.[57] They also experimented with open meetings of different types such as 'questions meetings', or running Tribune style 'Brains Trust' events devoted entirely to answering questions from members and the general public.

In an otherwise very positive external report on the party's activity in 1952, Jim Raisin (by then London party organiser) highlighted the SLLP's political education as an area of relative weakness. This, though, was rather mild criticism. Raisin noted simply that central organisation was 'somewhat weak' alongside the comment that the 'total amount' of political education was 'quite large' in an otherwise 'panegyric' report that claimed, amongst other things, that 'there is no aspect of party work that is not done well'.[58] However, attendance at separate political education meetings was a consistent problem; 'small—often only a few "faithfuls"' noted an early

commentator.[59] The competition with radio and, increasingly, television was frequently noted, the rival to a ward speaker 'might be a boxer or stage screen star or even a documentary'.[60] Attempts to use political discussion to attract attendance at ward meetings were not a success. In spite of an increased focus on political education and some reportedly very lively discussions and film shows, attendance at ward meetings in 1954 declined.[61] Concern about the levels and effectiveness of the education being provided continued throughout the period. In 1962, there were calls for the PEO to be made an automatic member of the Executive Committee.[62] In 1963, there were demands for an increase in political education, driven by the national party, to increase inner party democracy and the Young Socialists—influenced by the then PEO Dave Finney—passed a resolution regretting the 'lack of enthusiasm' shown by the party to 'political education and in particular its failure to consider properly the annual conference agenda'.[63] This pressure resulted in the establishment of a Political Education sub-committee, which considered ways to stimulate political debate without, it seems, proposing any radical departures.[64] Shortly afterwards Finney resigned as PEO because, according to his successor, 'of the lack of interest shown in political education activities'.[65] Finney's replacement, John Watts, also struggled to get people interested in political education. He focussed on increasing still further the political content of ward meetings (often less than half of the normal meeting time) and with improving the content and layout of *Digest*, although with little noticeable change to the operation of the party. In February 1968, he complained that he had plenty of ideas 'but was not able to put them into action' although, Watts attributed his resignation from the post later in the year to 'pressures of work'.[66]

The social side of the party activity supplemented these endeavours. Unlike many other constituency parties with large memberships, social activity was not based on a local Labour club that offered cheap beer as an incentive for membership. Nevertheless, the party did organise at both ward and constituency levels a range of social activities including dances and outings to the seaside and to shows. In one month in 1959, Rushey Green ward held a social evening for which over 150 tickets were sold, and arranged outings to Bexhill and Hastings. The ward was also organising a trip to the pantomime, 'Humpty Dumpty', with a strict limit of 150 tickets available.Whitefoot Ward held its regular dance with band at the 'congenial' Northover Hotel and Southend ward sold 100 tickets for a trip to see Southend lights and held their annual re-union and dance. Meanwhile a joint, 'Victory' social celebrated the local election results. Even the smallest of the wards, Culverley, took their turn to host the combined social evening, held at the constituency party headquarters.[67] Frequently trips were oversubscribed and, after complaints, disappointed members were chided, 'it you want a ticket don't wait to be asked'.[68] The aim of all this, though, was political in two crucial respects. First, and most obviously, party finances were heavily dependent on the money raised by the social activities. But second, an active social programme was also viewed as a crucial element in attracting people to Labour: 'Let's have some real parties, it's the cheapest way of getting good publicity for Labour that there is and far more cheerful than the gloomy if gaudy campaign the Tories are waging on the poster sites'.[69] Taken together, political education and social activities made for a fairly busy ward calendar. For example, Whitefoot, 'a striking example' of a 'well organised ward', in one fairly representative month in 1959, had talks by County councillors and Borough councillors—including one of the ward

chairmen on his impressions of County Hall during his first months of office—and heard recordings of the Labour Party conference in addition to its dances and theatre trips (the major scoop that month was a blockbooking for '*My Fair Lady*').[70] For many activists, all this would have been in addition into their regular membership canvassing and collecting.

Conclusion

In assessing arguments surrounding the political culture of the post-war Labour Party we set ourselves two tasks. First, to describe this political culture and, second, to examine the extent to which this culture provided an important component in explaining the trajectory of other aspects of the party's political fortunes. Perhaps the concept of political culture may appear clear enough intuitively and, despite wide-ranging debates, the task of defining political culture has appropriately been described as being like 'nailing jelly to the wall'.[71] Yet, a number of general points are worth making. Perhaps, most obviously, if political culture is conceived of in terms of values and practices, it cannot be seen in singular terms but rather must incorporate the idea of a distribution of these, including those that are dominant and those that are more contested or submerged. Any discussions which begin to look for the political culture of a complex organisation like the Labour Party must be particularly careful to address this issue. The means by which such practices and attitudes can be uncovered needs consideration. In the paper we have made some suggestions as to how to read the underlying, often unstated assumptions, of the most active party members associated with the treatment of institutions, in policy statements and debates, and by looking at ward level organisation and political education.

Implicit in this is the recognition that understanding the political culture of activists beyond this is a substantial challenge which may need very different methods. More substantially, claims about the causal impact of culture on other outcomes need to be carefully thought through. One route to such conclusions is to reconstruct the patterns of thought relating to the everyday life of party organisation and show how these could be related to outcomes of interest. Such an interpretivist approach to the study of political culture is particularly attractive to historians.[72] Yet, where there are other contending explanations of things such as Labour's electoral fortunes or falling membership, documenting a culture which may have reinforced such outcomes falls someway short of showing that these were a major explanatory factor. Such problems are particularly acute in the frequent cases where much of the evidence for particular ways of thinking is inferred from the outcomes themselves, or very closely related to it. This makes it important to utilize other forms of investigation to explore these conclusions. Such approaches may be possible, not least because if political culture was a major part of an explanation then we would expect different outcomes where cultures vary.

Overall, the political culture of the SLLP can be compared to the national picture. There are many points of continuity with the national party. In terms of policy, positions and the value given to loyalty to 'the party' the South Lewisham party appears rather typical, although, as we argued, this loyalty was not blind but rather an adhesion to a set of apparently effective institutions. As in the rest of the party, the post-war years in South Lewisham were no 'golden age' of activism. The organisation we have documented was beset by an array of difficulties. Membership never seemed high enough with difficulties particularly acute amongst women and young people. The effort required to retain old members and gain new ones was a never-ending and

exhausting one, there were frequent complaints that meetings were poorly attended and difficulties finding appropriate meeting spaces. Although finances were stable and even healthy on occasion, money remained an issue that augmented the party's feeling that it never had enough activists for campaigning and other functions. Perhaps most problematic of all was the issue of political education about which there were frequent complaints, never fully resolved. Yet, recognition of these problems and the failures of the South Lewisham party to act in an appropriate manner should not obscure the extent to which the party had a culture that looked rather different from that of the party nationally. In this period, it secured the adhesion of both members and activists on a scale that was the envy of many other constituency parties and which would appear a distant memory within only a few years. Its activist base, although never satisfactory for the leadership, was substantial and those activists took a pride in their organisation which, in various demonstrable ways, appeared to work. Even in the problematic field of political education, the party had a lively calendar of events supplemented by an internal magazine that made it comfortably one of the most well organized constituency parties in the region. The political culture of the SLLP was in crucial ways atypical, most obviously in the core value placed on membership and organization in the consciousness of Lewisham activists. It was in these respects even an extreme case, and the culture of the organisation reflected this. This unusual aspect of the South Lewisham party was of course correlated with some success, most notably in the levels of membership attained. However, the overall trajectory of membership, the periods of rise and decline, were not at all unusual. In this respect, Lewisham's rather distinctive political culture was correlated with a rather similar outcomes. Thus, internal political culture appeared to play a rather minor role in explaining these broader trajectories.

Notes

1. Lewisham Public Library Local Studies (LLS), A94/8/1/14, SLLP Annual Report, 1954, p.3.
2. See for examples David Howell, *British Workers and the Independent Labour Party, 1888–1906* (Manchester, 1983) and Duncan Tanner, *Political Change and the Labour Party, 1900–1918* (Cambridge, 1990).
3. See for example Duncan Tanner, 'Labour and its Membership', in Tanner, Pat Thane and Nick Tiratsoo (eds) *Labour's First Century* (Cambridge, 2000); Steven Fielding, 'Activists against "affluence": Labour Party Culture during the "Golden Age", c. 1950–70', *Journal of British Studies* 40:2 (2001); Lawrence Black, *Old Labour, New Britain? The Political Culture of the Left in Affluent Britain, 1951–64* (London, 2003).
4. The main aims of the project are to develop quantitative (specifically multiple recapture) methods to help bridge the gap between political science and historical literatures.
5. See also for example Peter Shapely, Duncan Tanner and Andrew Walling, 'Civic Culture and Housing Policy in Manchester, 1945–79', *Twentieth Century British History*, 15 (2002), pp.410–34 and Steven Fielding and Duncan Tanner, 'The "Rise of the Left" Revisited: Labour Party culture in post-war Manchester and Salford', *Labour History Review*, 71 (2006), pp.211-33.
6. Black, *Political Culture*, p.191. The book includes the Communist Party in its examination of the collective 'left'. The perhaps problematic issues surrounding the joint examination of very different parties are not considered in this paper.
7. Black, *Political Culture*, p.2. Black, 'The Impression of Affluence: Political Culture in the 1950s and 1960s' in L. Black and H. Pemberton (eds), An *Affluent Society? Britain's Post-war 'Golden Age' Revisited* (Aldershot, 2004) p.85.

8. Black, *Political Culture*, pp.65–93.
9. Black, *Political Culture*, pp.94–123.
10. Black, *Political Culture*, p.189.
11. Black, *Political Culture*, p.63.
12. Black, *Political Culture*, p.63.
13. For individual party membership figures, see Labour Party *Annual Reports*. Tanner, 'Labour and its Membership', gives an overview of trends in party membership and some of the reasons for treating the national figures with caution.
14. Tom Jeffery, 'The Suburban Nation. Politics and Class in Lewisham', in David Feldman and Gareth Stedman Jones (eds), *Metropolis—London: Histories and Representations since 1800* (London, 1989), pp.190 and 196; LLS, A94/8/1/2, SLLP AGM minutes, 12 March 1954.
15. Jeffery, 'The Suburban Nation', pp.194–6; R. W. Pepper, 'Urban Development of Lewisham—A Geographical Interpretation', MA 1965 (LLS), Ron Williamson, Interview (2002.163), Paul Featherstone, Interview (2002.164), Lewisham Voices programme (Museum of London).
16. Jeffery, 'The Suburban Nation', pp 191–2. The new seat included the wards of Bellingham, Southend, Grove Park,Whitefoot, Rushey Green, St Andrews and Culverley
17. *Lewisham Borough News*, 17 May 1949.
18. LLS, A94/8/2/9, Circular letter from E. W. Hooper secretary, n.d.; LLS, A94/8/2/9, Phil Gorin (secretary of Southend ward) letter to Hillam, 27 October 1963; LLS, A94/8/1/4, SLLP EC Minutes, 25 November 1966.
19. LLS, A94/8/2/8, Hillam circular letter to ward secretaries, 16 November 1967 and undated returns from all polling districts.
20. London Metropolitan Archive (LMA), 2417/E/4/31, SLLP Annual Report, 1952, p.5.
21. *Lewisham Borough News*, 29 April 1952; LMA, 2417/E/4/31, SLLP Agent's Report for Half-Year Ending 30 June 1952, p.2.
22. LLS, A94/8/1/2, SLLP Minutes, 30 September 1948.
23. A94/8/1/14, SLLP Annual Report, 1954, p.3.
24. For a recent overview of Labour's relationship to youth and youth organisation, see Fielding, *The Labour Governments, 1964–70: Labour and Cultural Change, Vol.1* (Manchester, 2004).
25. *Lewisham Borough News*, 20 July 1948; LLS, A94/8/1/2-3, SLLP Minutes, 3 July 1952; 12 November 1954; 26 July 1957.
26. For instance, see the analysis presented in Mark Abrams and Richard Rose, *Must Labour Lose?* (Harmondsworth, 1960).
27. LLS, A94/8/1/3, SLLP Minutes, 22 April 1960; 11 July 1960.
28. LLS, A94/8/1/3-4, SLLP Minutes, 17 November 1960; 14 June 1961; 11 September 1961; 27 November 1965; LLS, A94/8/2/27, Hillam correspondence to *Kentish Mercury*, 16 October 1961 and the *Lewisham Borough News*, 13 October 1961.
29. LLS, A94/8/7/3, *YS News*, Issue No.1, 1970.
30. LLS, A94/8/1/2-3, SLLP Minutes, 3 July 1952; 12 April 1957.
31. LMA, 2417/E/4/31, SLLP Agent's Report for Half-Year Ending 30 June 1953.
32. See, for instance, among many the local party campaigns on issues as diverse as ensuring the appointment of party members as school managers and governors, the repair of council properties (LLS, A94/8/1/2, SLLP Minutes, 17 September 1954), the vandalising of local phone boxes in November 1966 (LLS, A94/8/2/18), opposition to the sale of council houses and rent rises on LCC/GLC owned estates (LLS, A94/8/1/3-4, SLLP Minutes, 28 July 1955; 1 September 1967; 5 January 1968), and support for the campaign against closing of the Downham fire station (LLS, A94/8/2/31, 26 January 1970).
33. The leaflet was a reprint of a front-page article from the London Labour Party's *London News*, November 1952 (LMA, AC 2417/P/5).
34. LLS, A94/8/1/2, SLLP Minutes, 16 December 1952.
35. Very few found accommodation in the LCC and GLC estates of South

Lewisham until many years later. Of course, as elsewhere in London there had been a small but significant black population in Lewisham for many years before the mass immigration of the post-Second World War period, see Joan Anim-Addo, *Longest Journey: A History of Black Lewisham* (London, 1995). According to the census data for 1971 of the 16,605 Lewisham residents who had been born in the New Commonwealth (mainly Africa, Asia and the Caribbean) over 7000 were from Jamaica. The next largest communities were from India (1605), Cyprus (1535) and Nigeria (1105), *Census Report 1971: Greater London Part 1*, Table 14 (HMSO, 1973). Again according to the 1971 census data, those wards with the highest percentage of local authority housing (Bellingham, Grove Park,Whitefoot and Southend) were also those with the lowest numbers of those born in the New Commonwealth or with parents born in the New Commonwealth (between 1–3 per cent compared with a borough average of 8.4 per cent) while those wards with a higher ratio of privately rented accommodation such as Rushey Green had significantly higher numbers of recent immigrants (16.4 per cent), 'Lewisham Borough Ward Profiles 1976' (drawing upon 1971 census data), available in the Lewisham Local Studies Library.
36. LLS, A94/8/1/3-4, SLLP Minutes 28 July 1959; 11 September 1959; 26 October 1962; 5 November 1965; 6 October 1967.
37. LLS, A94/8/1/4-5, SLLP Minutes, 2 July 1965; 28 June 1968; 5 December 1969.
38. The vote was carried 21–16. LLS, A94/8/1/4, SLLP Minutes, 7 June 1963
39. LLS, A94/8/1/2, SLLP Minutes, 17 September 1954.
40. For instance see resolutions in at LLS, A94/8/1/3-4, SLLP Minutes, 24 September 1958 and 15 August 1962.
41. LLS, A94/8/1/3, SLLP Minutes, 23 September 1960; 28 October 1960; 17 November 1960; 25 November 1960.
42. LLS, A94/8/6/1, *Digest*, September–October, 1960, p.3.

43. LLS, A94/8/2/9, Jack Cameron letter to Cyril Hillam, 18 March 1963; LLS, A94/8/1/4, SLLP Minutes, 5 April 1963.
44. LLS, A94/8/2/2, Dorothy Eagles letter to Hillam, 14 March 1964.
45. *Party Organisation*, 1957 (tenth edition), pp.20–1.
46. LLS, A94/8/6/1, A Collector, 'Work in the Wards: Collectors—by one of them', Digest, April–May, 1957.
47. LLS, A94/8/6/1, A Collector, 'Work in the Wards: Collectors—by one of them', Digest, April–May, 1957.
48. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards', *Digest*, September–October, 1958.
49. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Mabel Raisin, 'News from the Wards', *Digest*, April–May, 1957; Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards', Digest, November– December, 1959.
50. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards', *Digest*, September–October 1958.
51. LLS, A94/8/6/1, *Digest*, March–April, 1959.
52. LMA, 2417/E/4/31, SLLP Agent's Report for Half-Year Ending 31 December 1952.
53. LMA, 2417/E/3/39, SLLP Agent's Report for the 'New Party', 30 September 1948, p.3.
54. LMA, 2417/E/4/31, SLLP Agent's Report for Half-Year Ending 30 June 1952.
55. LLS, A94/8/1/14, SLLP Annual Report, 1954, p.3.
56. LMA, 2417/E/4/31, SLLP Agent's Report for Half-Year Ending 30 June 1952.
57. LLS, A94/8/2/4, 'South Lewisham', typescript, n.d. [summer 1962?], p.1.
58. LMA, 2417/E/4/31, London District Organiser's Report on SLLP AGM, 22 February 1952.
59. LMA, 2417/E/3/39, SLLP Agent's Report for the 'New Party', 30 September 1948.
60. LLS, A94/8/1/14, SLLP Annual Report, 1956, p.5.
61. LLS, A94/8/1/14, SLLP Annual Report, 1954, p.5.
62. LLS, A94/8/2/9, Rickson (Culverley ward) letter to Hillam, 9 January 1962;

Bellinger (St. Andrews ward) letter to Hillam, 21 February 1962.
63. The Young Socialists submitted a resolution to the general council reaffirming the party's dedication to democratic socialism and Clause 4 and demanding an extension of democracy by the NEC inaugurating 'a massive campaign of political education in the party, industry and the nation'. LLS, A94/8/1/4, SLLP Minutes, 7 June 1963.
64. LLS, A94/8/1/4, SLLP Minutes, 4 October 1963; 24 October 1963; LLS, A94/8/2/9, Hillam circular letter to PEOs, 22 February 1965; LLS, A94/8/2/9, Typed report of ward PEOs meeting, 10 March 1965.
65. LLS, A94/8/2/9, 'To: Members of the Executive. Political Education Activities', no author [John Watts?] n.d. [1966?].
66. LLS, A94/8/1/4, SLLP Minutes (EC), 23 February 1968; (EC) 28 June 1968.
67. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards', *Digest*, March–April 1959.
68. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards', *Digest*, November–December 1959.
69. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards', *Digest*, January–February 1959
70. LLS, A94/8/6/1, Ernie Murphy, 'Round the Wards, *Digest*, November–December 1959.
71. P. Novick, *That Noble Dream*, cited in R. Formisano, 'The Concept of Political Culture', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 31 (2001), p.394.
72. For an overview of the concept of political culture and particularly the connection between interpretivist accounts of political culture and historical research from a political science perspective, see S. Welch, *The Concept of Political Culture* (London, 1993).